

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1000
INFO AMEMBASSY DARESSALAAM
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 2771

SALISBURY: FROM SEITZ

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, UK, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: MEETING WITH THE PUBLIC SERVICES ASSOCIATION

1. SUMMARY: THE PUBLIC SERVICES ASSOCIATION HAS ASKED HMG
TO TAKE OVER THE ADMINISTRATION OF A PENSIONS PROGRAM BUT
NOT THE COST. THEY ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT SOME PUBLIC SERVANTS
WILL HAVE TO LEAVE RHODESIA BEFORE OR SHORTLY AFTER TRANSFER
DAY. END SUMMARY.

2. GRAHAM AND I MET WITH LEADERS OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES
ASSOCIATION ON NOVEMBER 4. THE ASSOCIATION REPRESENTS OR
REFLECTS THE VIEWS OF SOME 12,000 RHODESIA PUBLIC SERVANTS
(ABOUT 25 PERCENT OF WHOM ARE BLACK) WHO DO NOT HAVE A
SEPARATE, FUNDED PENSION SCHEME, PENSIONS ARE PAID OUT OF
CURRENT GOVERNMENT REVENUE.

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3. THE ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES PRESENTED A NEWLY
PUBLISHED PAMPHLET AND AN AIDE-MEMOIR WHICH SOUGHT TO
ESTABLISH THAT A) RHODESIA'S PUBLIC EMPLOYEES HAVE
LEGALLY REMAINED SERVANTS OF THE BRITISH CROWN DESPITE
THE EVENTS OF THE LAST DECADE; B) HMG SHOULD GUARANTEE
COMPENSATION FOR "LOSS OF CAREER" DURING THE POST-

INDEPENDENCE AFRICANIZATION PROGRAM; C) PENSION PAYMENTS SHOULD BE ALLOCATED BY THE NEW GOVERNMENT BUT ADMINISTERED BY HMG UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE OVERSEAS PENSION ACT PASSED BY THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT IN 1973.

4. THE ASSOCIATION ARGUED THAT THE PUBLIC SERVICE WILL BE AS IMPORTANT TO AN ORDERLY TRANSITION AS THE SECURITY FORCES, BUT HIGHLY SKILLED EMPLOYEES ARE ALREADY LEAVING THE COUNTRY AND MANY MORE ARE LIKELY TO FOLLOW IF THEIR POSITIONS ARE NOT BETTER GUARANTEED. DURING THE DISCUSSION THE ASSOCIATION DID NOT SERIOUSLY PUSH THE IDEA THAT PUBLIC SERVANTS, IF THEY CHOOSE TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY, SHOULD BE COMPENSATED FOR LOSS OF CAREER. THEY ALSO SEEMED TO ACCEPT THAT BEYOND THE BILL OF RIGHTS THERE WERE NOT IMMUTABLE GUARANTEES THAT A ZIMBABWE GOVERNMENT WOULD ACTUALLY PAY PENSIONS OR ALLOW THE PROCEEDS TO BE TRANSFERRED ABROAD. THEY FELT STRONGLY, HOWEVER, THAT HMG SHOULD ADMINISTER THE PENSION PROGRAM (NOT FINANCE IT) UNDER THE OVERSEAS PENSIONS ACT BY RECEIVING AN ANNUAL LUMP SUM FROM ZIMBABWE AND BECOMING PAYMASTER FOR THE RECIPIENTS. HMG WOULD ACT AS A PENSIONERS' AGENT ON A GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT BASIS, AND ARRANGEMENT THE ASSOCIATION CLAIMED WOULD GIVE ITS MEMBERS A GREAT SENSE OF REASSURANCE AND PROTECTION. IT WOULD ALSO RELIEVE THE INDEPENDENT GOV-
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ERNMENT OF THE ODIUM OF REGULARLY PAYING LARGE SUMS TO INDIVIDUAL WHITES.

5. GRAHAM RESISTED THIS, SAYING THAT THE PENSIONS ACT APPLIED ONLY TO PUBLIC SERVANTS RECRUITED BY HMG ON EXPATRIATE TERMS. BUT WHEN THE ASSOCIATION LEADERS HAD LEFT, HE AGREED THERE WAS MERIT IN THEIR CASE AND THAT A GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT PROGRAM - PARTICULARLY SINCE THE MACHINERY ALREADY EXISTS - WAS NOT MUCH TO ASK IF IT WOULD SETTLE THE PENSION ISSUE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS. GRAHAM WILL LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITIES WHEN WE RETURN TO LONDON.

6. COMMENT: THE CIVIL SERVANTS ARE AN IMPORTANT INTEREST GROUP IN RHODEISA AND THEY ARE RIGHT TO SAY THAT MUCH OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR AN ORDERLY TRANSITION WILL FALL ON THEM. THEIR FEARS ABOUT THEIR OWN FUTURE ARE UNDERSTANDABLE AND THEIR DEMANDS FOR GUARANTEES SEEM SURPRISINGLY MODERATE. THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF THE INEVITABILITY OF BLACK RULE AND THEY MADE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO USE THE TERM "ZIMBABWE". THE REQUEST THAT HMG ACT AS PENSIONERS' PAYMASTER MAY NOT BE WELCOMED IN LONDON. IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TOOK OVER THE ADMIN-

ISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM AND THINGS SUBSEQUENTLY WENT
WRONG, PRESSURE WOULD AMOUNT TO ASSUME THE DEBT.

7. THE ASSOCIATION MENTIONED A MINOR BUT INTERESTING
POINT. THEY RAISED THE PROBLEM OF SOME CIVIL SERVANTS
SUCH AS DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS AND PRISON OFFICIALS WHO
FEEL ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO RECRIMINATION AND MIGHT
WANT TO LEAVE RHODESIA BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. PENSION
PROBLEMS ASIDE, THE ASSOCIATION IS IMPLYING THAT THERE
ARE "UNACCEPTABLE ELEMENTS" IN THE CIVIL SERVICE WHO WOULD
WANT TO GO OR HAVE TO GO SHORTLY AFTER TRANSFER DAY. THE
PATRIOTIC FRONT HAS ARGUED THIS SAME CASE FROM A DIFFER-
ENT POINT OF VIEW.

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Message Attributes

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